

# The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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**Issued by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland  
Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice**

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*“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because  
of the truth” Psalm 60:4*

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**January:** *First Sabbath:* Nkayi; *Fifth:* Auckland, Inverness, New Canaan.

**February:** *First Sabbath:* Broadstairs; *Second:* Dingwall; *Third:* Stornoway; *Fourth:* North Uist, Zenka.

**March:** *First Sabbath:* Larne, Sydney, Ullapool; *Second:* Ness, Portree, Tarbert; *Third:* Halkirk, Kyle of Lochalsh; *Fourth:* Barnoldswick, Ingwenya, North Tolsta.

**April:** *Second Sabbath:* Gisborne, Leverburgh, Staffin; *Third:* Chesley, Laide; *Fourth:* Glasgow; *Fifth:* Mbuma.

**May:** *First Sabbath:* Aberdeen, Grafton, London; *Second:* Achmore, Donsa, Fort William, New Canaan, Scourie; *Third:* Edinburgh; *Fourth:* Chiedza.

**June:** *First Sabbath:* Auckland, Farr, Perth; *Second:* Nkayi, Santa Fe, Shieldaig; *Third:* Lochcarron, Uig; *Fourth:* Bulawayo, Gairloch, Inverness, Raasay.

**July:** *First Sabbath:* Beauly; *Second:* Bonar Bridge, Staffin; *Third:* Applecross; *Fourth:* Struan; *Fifth:* Cameron.

**August:** *First Sabbath:* Dingwall; *Second:* Leverburgh, New Canaan, Somakantana; *Third:* Laide; *Fourth:* Stornoway, Vatten, Zenka.

**September:** *First Sabbath:* Chesley, Larne, Sydney, Ullapool; *Second:* Halkirk, Mnaka, Portree; *Third:* Aberdeen, Tarbert; *Fourth:* Barnoldswick, North Uist; *Fifth:* Ingwenya.

**October:** *First Sabbath:* Dornoch, Grafton, Lochcarron, North Tolsta; *Second:* Gairloch, Ness; *Third:* London; *Fourth:* Edinburgh, Gisborne, Uig, Mbuma.

**November:** *Second Sabbath:* Glasgow; *Third:* Wellington; *Fourth:* Chiedza.

**December:** *First Sabbath:* Singapore; *Third:* Bulawayo, Santa Fe, Tauranga.

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## “Godliness with Contentment”

As Paul was approaching the close of his First Epistle to Timothy he warned his younger colleague of some of the characteristics of false teachers. Among these teachers were those who supposed “that gain is godliness” (1 Tim 6:5); they professed to be godly in order to further their worldly interests. Timothy was to have no fellowship with such people; rather he was to withdraw himself from them.

On the other hand, Paul went on to emphasise that “godliness with contentment is great gain”. To be contented is to be obedient to the commandment, “Thou shalt not covet”. Had he not been writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we might have felt Paul was going too far when he claimed: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil 4:11). But no, Paul was not exaggerating; the Holy Spirit had been working in his heart to a remarkable degree, and he saw that his present situation, whatever it might be, was the result of God’s control of his providence. However unwelcome his circumstances, God was ruling over everything and it was all working together for his good (see Rom 8:28). Thus not only ought Paul to be content but he actually was; his was a real contentment although, while he was in this world, it could not have been perfect.

Paul’s contentment was evidence of his real godliness. It flowed from his strong sense that God is in control of everything that happens, so that not even a sparrow falls to the ground unless it is God’s will. How then did Paul react to what must have been disappointing outcomes when he appeared before Felix and Festus and Agrippa? He must have focused, not on the injustice of the treatment he received, though that was palpable, but on God’s goodness, which would make all these decisions work out for His glory and ultimately for Paul’s own benefit and, very possibly, to advance the gospel. While it would have been very natural to become annoyed, even angry, at the judicial process, Paul could, through grace, leave everything in the hands of God, knowing that He was ordering all the events in his life, and all the affairs of the Church, in infinite wisdom.

So when writing to “the saints in Christ Jesus” in Philippi, Paul emphasised:

“I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel” (Phil 1:12). In particular, sinners had received spiritual blessings through his teaching in Rome; possibly his situation as a prisoner afforded him better opportunities to spread the gospel than would otherwise have been the case – though it would clearly have been much more pleasant to go to Rome as a free man. Paul could not normally know what was ahead of him, but he trusted the all-wise God to order his affairs. He could rest content with that ordering, and he would realise that God takes glory to Himself in everything.

Especially if we have enough to eat and enough to keep us warm, we should be content; so Paul counselled Timothy: “Having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Tim 6:8). He brought out the contrast between contentment and the desire to be rich. Those who are possessed with such a desire, Paul went on to warn, “fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition”. Indeed he insisted that “the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”. We should note that it is the *love* of money, rather than money itself, which is highlighted as a danger, but clearly much grace is always required to maintain a right attitude to money.

On the other hand, a proper perspective on life will help to preserve us from such dangers; Paul reminds Timothy that “we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out”. He uses this as an argument for contentment; especially if we have enough food and clothing, there is no point in murmuring because we do not have more. If we have more money than we need, we cannot take the surplus with us when we die. Did Paul have Job in mind as he wrote to Timothy? Job had lost everything, even his family, and yet he could say in a spirit of gracious contentment, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (1:21). This godly man recognised also that God was in control, and this consciousness supported him in his time of desperate trouble.

Yet what Paul sees as great gain is not contentment as such, but the contentment that flows from godliness. John Calvin explains godliness as the service of God and adds that this is the mark which religion aims at. He then asks, “What is religion?” and answers, “It is the reverence that we owe to God, to submit ourselves wholly to His Word, to honour Him as He commandeth us, to call upon Him, to dedicate ourselves to His obedience”.<sup>1</sup> And there can be no true godliness, there can be no sincere religion, apart from

<sup>1</sup>*Sermons on the Epistles to Timothy and Titus*, Banner of Truth Trust 1983 reprint, p 456.

faith. So Timothy, in his ministry, was to charge the rich not to “trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God” (1 Tim 6:17). He would also see it as his duty to charge others, including those who could never have any prospect of obtaining riches, to trust in the living God as the one who could supply all their needs, not only for time, but also for eternity. As Paul well knew, and Timothy also, to be prepared for eternity is the greatest need of all.

Counterfeit godliness could lead to no real gain, and apart from godliness there could be no lasting contentment. But, as we have noted already, “godliness with contentment is great gain”. It is what we may take when we die and must leave behind everything we possess of this world’s goods, whether that is little or much. Accordingly, considering time and eternity together, “better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith” (Prov 15:16). The fear of the Lord is basically another expression for godliness, and John Flavel defines it as “a gracious habit or principle planted by God in the soul, whereby the soul is kept under an holy awe of the eye of God, and from thence is inclined to perform and do what pleaseth Him, and to shun and avoid whatsoever He forbids and hates”.<sup>2</sup> Flavel was unconsciously describing himself.

Even if those who fear God experience trouble in this life – and that, as the Saviour warned them, is what they must be prepared for – they do not have to meet that trouble alone. That is part of the great gain that is theirs, particularly if they react to their troubles in a contented spirit. Paul encourages them: “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5).

Those whose godliness is sincere – who fear God and therefore, through grace, show a degree of contentment with the things they possess – have gained much; they have something to take away with them from this world when they must leave everything else behind. Not least, they have a right to a place in heaven. So Paul, whose focus was not on the things that are seen and temporal but on the things which are unseen and eternal, looked into the future in the knowledge “that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor 4:18-5:1). On the day when Paul’s soul left its earthly tabernacle, all was well. The real contentment of this life changed into perfect delight in the blessedness of heaven; the real godliness which he showed in this world became perfect also. So, if that great gain is to be ours, let us take heed to this further direction that Paul addressed to Timothy: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim 6:12).

<sup>2</sup>*Works*, Banner of Truth Trust 1968 reprint, vol 3, p 252.

## Forgiveness (2)<sup>1</sup>

A Sermon by Alexander Grierson

Luke 5:20. *And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

(2.) The forgiveness here bestowed is a *present* forgiveness. Jesus does not put him off with a promise, either conditional or unconditional, of pardon at some future time. He actually bestows it now. He does not send him back to his home, telling him to be faithful in the discharge of every duty and then to expect forgiveness. He does not say to him as Solomon said to Adonijah, who had attempted to usurp his throne, “If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die”. Christ does not thus put the paralytic on his good behaviour, and suspend His forgiveness upon the result. He says to him, “Thy sins *are* forgiven thee”. No religious rite or outward observance is prescribed. He does not send him to read about forgiveness in his Bible, or pray for it in his closet. He speaks neither of sermon nor sacrament, but He says, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”.

Nor is it a promise of future forgiveness, however unconditional or free. He does not bid him expect forgiveness at the close of life or look for mercy at the judgement day. His words secure all this and much more. They promise him a present pardon. Sentence of acquittal has already been passed on him by the lips of One who is to occupy the judgement seat at last, in these words, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”. Regarding Him it would be the highest blasphemy to suppose that He could either lie or repent.

(3). There is a feature in the forgiveness here bestowed that is still more remarkable. It contains the element of *personal assurance*. It is not a display, however bright or glorious, of God’s pardoning mercy or the Redeemer’s saving power or the Spirit’s sanctifying grace, as set forth in general terms, in the gospel, for the acceptance of sinners. But it is a personal assurance to this man in particular that he has actually become a partaker in the great salvation. This is by far the most wonderful feature in the whole transaction. The form in which he is addressed is so direct and personal that, if he really believed Christ to be the true Messiah, as the whole passage shows that he did, and if he understood and believed the words that Christ spoke to him, then whatever fears or doubts might formerly have oppressed him, all such

<sup>1</sup>The first part of this sermon appeared last month; it is taken, with editing, from Grierson’s *Sermons*. The first head dealt with the Author and Bestower of forgiveness and the second considers its nature. Only one of four points was handled under this second head; it was: the *greatness* of forgiveness. The rest of the sermon appears in this issue.

doubts must have given place to joy and peace in believing, when Christ said to him, “*Thy sins are forgiven thee*”.

It is an assurance similar to that given to David after he had sinned greatly in the matter of Uriah. The prophet Nathan was sent to convince him of his heinous sin, which he did by the parable of the rich man who would not take provision for his guest from his exceeding many flocks and herds, but took the poor man’s one ewe lamb, which drank of his own cup and lay in his bosom and was unto him as a daughter. “And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die.” Little did David know that he was pronouncing his own doom. No sooner had the sentence been uttered than an arrow from Jehovah’s quiver pierced his heart, in the words of his messenger, “*Thou art the man*”; and the words that follow showed him that the guilt of the rich man in the parable which had roused his anger was as nothing in comparison with his own. “Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon” (2 Sam 12:9).

Now he knew the difference between a vague general knowledge of sin, and a deep, humbling, agonising conviction of his own sins. The sin of which he was convicted was one of those which (as David well knew) the law expressly required (Lev 20:10) to be punished with death. As, in this instance, the king was the criminal, David probably expected that the God of Israel would vindicate His justice by inflicting this terrible penalty Himself. This personal conviction of sin, both in its guilt and consequences, was followed by an equally explicit confession: “I have sinned against the Lord”, and this again was followed by the assurance: “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die”.

And so, when Isaiah (6:1) saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, surrounded by the seraphim, each covering his face and his feet with his wings, and crying one to another, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts,” the prophet doubtless remembered what the Lord had said to Moses: “Thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live”. Isaiah was overwhelmed with terror and exclaimed, “Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts”. But what a joyful discovery was made to the prophet when one of the seraphim flew to him, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and laid it upon his lips and said, “Lo, this hath touched *thy* lips; and *thine* iniquity is taken away, and *thy* sin purged”.

Now, the assurance of pardon given in our text is equally as direct and

personal as that granted to David or Isaiah; the only difference is that here it is not sent by the mouth of prophet or seraph, but the Great High Priest Himself says to the paralytic, as He did to the woman that was a sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven thee". There is a broad distinction between the general assurances, with which the gospel abounds, of mercy to every penitent, believing sinner and the particular assurance addressed to individuals in such cases as these. Such general offers of mercy are addressed to the prodigal in the far country; the *particular* assurance of the text belongs only to the prodigal returned, when put in possession of the tokens of his father's favour, the smile of welcome and the embrace of love. Then he feels the joy of reconciliation thrilling through his whole soul: "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found".

Such is the nature of the forgiveness here bestowed. It is not partial but full, not promised at some future day, but granted now. It is moreover accompanied by a full personal assurance; it meets all the desires of the soul, and nothing less will satisfy any soul that is really awakened to a sense of sin.

**3. The channel through which forgiveness was obtained** by the paralytic. May it not be obtained by us still in the same way? Now, two things are very obvious in regard to the state of this man's mind before he obtained forgiveness. He first felt his disease, for "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick". And the treatment which he received shows that he was aware of his spiritual malady as well as of his bodily disease. For when Christ says to him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee", He is conveying a boon of which the man must have felt his need if it was to be appreciated. Those who came to Christ, for mere bodily healing, obtained what they sought but went away without any higher blessing. Not so this man; he was alive to a sense of his condition, not only as a paralytic who needed healing but as a sinner seeking forgiveness.

But his conduct makes it still further apparent that he had *faith* in Christ as the great Physician both of body and soul. We see faith displaying itself in all its simplicity and energy, not in words but in conduct. See how it surmounts every obstacle and overcomes every difficulty that stands in its way. "And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and let him down through the tiling with his couch, into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." It was his faith that was so fertile in devising a plan, and so bold in executing it; and it is such faith that removes mountains and bears down all opposition, that honours Christ and is honoured by Him in return, by receiving forgiveness in all its power and in all its preciousness.



Would you enjoy this blessed boon? Then, I ask, Do you *feel* your need of forgiveness as this man felt it? If so, then nothing stands between you and forgiveness but unbelief. Nothing can put you in possession of it but faith, faith in Christ as He is revealed in the gospel.

(1.) No intimation of pardon to the guilty can be found even in the most minute survey of God's works in *creation*. These clearly set forth "His eternal power and Godhead". But though we had the wings and the intellect of an angel and could survey immensity, we could never discover the doctrine of forgiveness of sin. "The depth saith, It is not with me. . . . It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire."

(2.) Nor can any well-founded hope of pardon be gathered from the closest scrutiny of God's *providence*. Proofs that God is good, and that He delights in His creatures' happiness, present themselves on every side. For "His tender mercies are over all His works", and there is not one of us, whatever our temporal condition, whom the retrospect of life ought not to fill with a grateful, indeed an admiring and self-abasing sense of the Lord's undeserved loving-kindness. We may well say in reviewing the Lord's dealings with us, as did Jacob, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac . . . I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto thy servant".

But however grateful we may be for the Lord's goodness, the facts of providence are utterly irreconcilable with the idea of Him allowing sin to pass with impunity. To say nothing of those extraordinary manifestations of Jehovah's anger when He sends forth His desolating judgements upon nations in the form of war and pestilence, there is one fact of universal and perpetual occurrence. Disease enters the family circle and seizes one of its best-loved members; it refuses to be charmed away by the physician's skill or the tears of distressed relatives, but keeps the victim in its unrelenting grasp till, after a period of suffering, death closes the scene. And when I am left to gaze on the lifeless remains of one dear to me, how can I overlook the account the Bible gives of the introduction of this mysterious thing into the world: that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, because all have sinned. Can I at such a time found my hopes of forgiveness on anything that providence reveals of God's moral character? Am I not rather reminded that the wages of sin is death?

(3.) I turn away from what I see in creation and providence to examine what is written in the *law*. It is indeed a perfect rule of duty – holy, just and good; and if I was an unfallen, sinless creature it would be a sufficient guide. But the moment I feel myself a sinner, the law utterly fails to meet my case;

there is no hint of forgiveness. It declares, "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all", and, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them".

(4.) Shall I betake myself to the copy of the law written by our Creator on the tablet of the heart and consult *conscience*? But if conscience is at all quickened by the Spirit and enlightened by the Word, it owns that God's law is reasonable and condemns the guilty transgressor. It condemns the sinner to his face, and fully approves the sentence that the law has pronounced, testifying that "they who do such things are worthy of death". Conscience not only knows nothing of forgiveness, but as God's sentinel in the soul it refuses to listen to any intimations of forgiveness, from whatever quarter, till He who placed it there comes and speaks peace to the soul. John Owen has finely said: "If a man of courage and honesty be entrusted with the command of a garrison to keep a fortress against an enemy, let one come in and tell him that peace has been concluded between his country and their enemies, so that he may leave guard, set open the gates, and cease his watchfulness; how wary will he be, lest under this pretence he be betrayed. No, saith he, I will keep my hold until I have express orders from my superiors. . . . Hence conscience labours with all her might to keep its whole dominion, and to keep out the power of forgiveness from being enthroned in the soul."

Who has ever conversed with an awakened sinner and has not felt the truth and justice of this? You may try to relieve his anxieties, and labour to gain an entrance for the sweet consolations of the gospel, but all the promises in the Bible of pardon, for even the chief of sinners, will fail to pacify his troubled conscience till the Lord of conscience Himself appears, sprinkles it with His own peace-speaking blood, and says to the troubled soul, as He did to the troubled sea, "Be still". Then there is a great calm.

Now, the pardoning mercy of God is sought in vain in the works of creation and the ways of providence, in the law written on tables of stone or graven on man's heart. It is revealed with great plainness in the *gospel*. Forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ forms the very essence of its glad tidings and can only be apprehended by faith. It is a doctrine of pure *revelation*; we have no source of information but the testimony of God, and if we do not set to our seal that God is true and rest on His simple Word in this matter, we must for ever continue strangers to forgiveness. Prior to our experience of its power, we have no witness to it but the Word and Spirit of God. Hence the Apostle says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor 2:9), and forgiveness is one of these things. How then is knowledge of them to be attained? The Apostle adds, "God hath revealed them unto us

by His Spirit”; the Spirit makes this revelation to faith. In the gospel, “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.”

The gospel does not indeed reveal to anyone in particular that his sins are forgiven. But the *grounds* of forgiveness as laid in the sufferings and death of God’s dear Son are sure and broad; its offers gloriously free; its invitations earnest and oft-repeated; its assurances of welcome abundantly full. “Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Here, surely, is sufficient warrant for each one to appropriate forgiveness, and though you may not yet have the full consciousness that you possess it, you have every encouragement to stretch out your hand and receive it. But the eye of faith is feeble, and its hand withered. Seek that your eyes may be anointed with the unction of the Spirit; pray that your withered hand may be strengthened with almighty power so that you may grasp the precious boon; never relax your efforts, or remit your prayers, till you can say assuredly, “I know in whom I have believed”.

Meanwhile, your condition resembles that of a merchant who has all his wealth in a far country and is seeking to bring it home. If it arrives in safety, he is rich; if it miscarries, he is ruined. A letter arrives informing him that his treasures are safely on board the ship that is to convey them home, and this good news from a far country is as cold waters to his thirsty soul. Still his anxieties are great, when he considers the hazards of wind and tide, and remembers that his all is at stake. He looks and longs from day to day for tidings of their arrival; and not until the ocean has been crossed, the ship has reached the harbour, and her precious cargo secured, is his mind at rest.

So is it with the soul seeking the pearl of great price. The gospel report, that there is forgiveness with God, is precious; he loves to hear it preached; he watches against sin and temptation, lest he should have received the grace of God in vain; he attends the means of grace diligently and is gladdened with every fresh gale of the Spirit that may further the expected return from the land of promise. When it actually arrives, when the Spirit testifies with his spirit that he is forgiven, a child of God and an heir of heaven, he rejoices “with joy unspeakable and full of glory”. Surely one such feeling of God’s favour and love, in his experience, even if only at the hour of death, is abundant reward for the faith and patience, waiting and obedience of a whole lifetime. “Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord”, for “blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the *whole heart*”.

**4. The evidence by which forgiveness was accompanied and followed.** The forgiveness was spiritual and invisible, what faith alone could apprehend;

but the cure wrought on the body was palpable to all. Christ appeals to the latter, not as an illustration of His spiritual power, but as a proof or evidence of it. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God." The connection between the act of forgiveness and the bodily cure, as appropriate evidence, becomes plain when we consider the connection between sin and disease. Though we must not estimate the sinfulness of individuals by the extent of their bodily sufferings, yet all bodily suffering is the effect of sin.

Now the purpose for which the Son of God was manifested was "that He might destroy the works of the devil". Sin, the devil's work, has affected both the souls and bodies of men. By satisfying God's justice for sin, Christ has gone, as it were, to the fountain-head, and "made an end of sin". So He has power to counteract all the evil consequences that flow from it. He has power to dispossess Satan of all his strongholds, both in body and soul; and by removing the effects of sin on the body, He proves His power to remove the invisible effects of sin, and to destroy sin itself in the soul. The same connection between the removal of the visible and invisible effects of sin is pointed at by Isaiah: "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (33:24).

Now, in every instance in which forgiveness is bestowed upon a sinner, it is accompanied by appropriate evidence of its reality, in the experience and life of the sinner. You may not, like the paralytic, suffer bodily disease, but the leprosy of sin has overspread and polluted our whole moral nature. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." And if you are pardoned, you will also be healed; if the guilt of sin is forgiven, its pollution also will be removed. If your sins are washed away in the blood of Christ, your souls themselves must undergo the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus", but all such do not walk after the flesh but after the Spirit. Do you possess this evidence? Has your love of sin been extinguished? Has the habit of sin been broken? Has the reigning power of sin been destroyed?

Observe too that in the instance in our text, the evidence of forgiveness consisted, not so much in a general exemption from disease, as in his being healed of the *particular* disease of palsy which he suffered. So it is still. The evidence of our forgiveness consists not in our being free from vices to which others may be prone but to which we have never been addicted. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to *his own way*."

And it is when each is brought back from his own way into the way of holiness that he enjoys satisfactory evidence of his conversion to God.

How is it then with you, as to your besetting sins? Have you abandoned sinful pleasures and laid aside questionable conformity? Has the world itself and its attractions ceased to be the chief object of your desire? Does your life declare plainly that you seek a better country? And how is it with those graces and duties to which you are naturally most averse? Is your humility deepened, your temper sweetened, your zeal quickened, your liberality extended, your love to Christ increased day by day? "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement, that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God (Phil 1:9-11).

But is no one of a very different character present – yet a stranger to Christ, and now about to go home to live on in wilful neglect of the great salvation? You may enjoy bodily health and every temporal blessing. Your life may be outwardly decent and your fellow men may respect you. But whether you believe it or not, you are in dreadful danger of losing your soul. Your life is but a vapour which soon vanishes away. Your soul is labouring under a disease which none but the Almighty Physician can heal, and if you will not apply to Him, that disease will soon land you in the horrors of the second death. While yet there is hope, we would pity and pray for you.

If Jeremiah or Paul were yet on earth they would "weep in secret places for your pride". But be assured that if you live and die slighting the offers of God's mercy, trampling under foot the blood of His dear Son, you shall perish at last without pity. The mercy of God will be at an end. "Because ye have set at naught all My counsel and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." Nor will there be one among the holy creatures of God, not even your nearest relative – husband or wife, parent or child, brother or sister – who will have any compassion for your soul. For pity on an impenitent rebel would be to participate in his rebellion. It would be high treason to the Great King. Your own conscience will be your perpetual tormentor because you have, with guilty infatuation, preferred darkness to light and chosen death rather than life.

Listen to friendly counsel from heaven before it is too late: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

# Benefits of the Reformation to Scotland<sup>1</sup>

## 3. A Nation Liberated, Covenanted and Educated

*Matthew Vogan*

**3. A Liberated Nation.** By means of the Reformation, Scotland was liberated from thralldom to a foreign monarchy in Rome. The Papal Jurisdiction Act ended this control, which had been “very hurtful and prejudicial to our sovereign’s authority and common weal of this realm”. The Scottish Reformation also asserted freedom for the Church within the nation from the control of the monarch and so ensured that an entirely biblical establishment was formed for the first time in Europe. William Hetherington writes that “Scotland was the only country in which the great and true principle of the distinct and separate jurisdictions of Church and state was from the very first assumed as the basis of its Reformation polity; and, consequently, it was the first country since the Christian era in which religious liberty was constitutionally secured”.<sup>2</sup> Thus they rejected the Erastian system, where the state rules over the Church, as well as the Papal system, where the Church rules over the state; neither was subordinate to the other; rather they were co-ordinate powers. They claimed freedom for both Church and state to function as ordained by God, with mutual co-operation but as separate jurisdictions.

This was strikingly different to the English Reformation, where the nature, pace and extent of the Reformation were determined by the will of the monarch. “In Scotland”, Thomas M’Crie notes, “the people were converted to the Protestant faith before the civil power had moved a step in the cause; and when the legislature became friendly to the Reformation, nothing remained for it to do but to ratify the profession which the nation had adopted.”<sup>3</sup> Many times the civil power has sought to have the Church “entangled again with the yoke of bondage” through monarchs, parliaments and court rulings, but the constant motto of those that have been true to the biblical truth recovered at the Reformation is: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” (Gal 5:1). It has been a principle for which many were therefore well prepared both to suffer and die.

Attempts to assert a superior authority for the civil power were not slow in emerging. At the second General Assembly, Maitland of Lethington questioned the propriety of their meeting without the Queen’s authority.

<sup>1</sup>Last month’s article was entitled: “Scotland Revolutionised and Reformed”.

<sup>2</sup>W M Hetherington, “Toleration, the Law of Religious Liberty”, in *Ter-Centenary of the Scottish Reformation*, ed J A Wylie, Edinburgh, 1860, p 174.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas M’Crie (jnr), *Sketches of Scottish Church History*, Edinburgh, 1841, p 64.

Someone responded, “If the liberty of the Kirk should depend upon the Queen’s allowance or disallowance, we are assured we shall be deprived, not only of assemblies, but of the public preaching of the gospel”. “No such thing”, said Lethington. “Well, time will try,” replied John Knox; “but I will add, Take from us the freedom of assemblies, and take from us the evangel; for without assemblies how shall good order and unity in doctrine be kept?”<sup>4</sup> This was the mind of the Assembly, who were persuaded that their authority came from the King of kings alone.

The Reformers also taught, however, a freedom from political tyranny in the state. John Knox and George Buchanan believed that political power was not vested in the monarchy or the nobility but in the people. A covenant existed between the people and those to whom they granted the authority to rule, whether monarch or parliament, and that authority could be withdrawn if abused. This meant that a tyrannising monarch could be lawfully resisted by arms and their authority removed even to the point of killing them in self-defence. These principles were derived from Scripture and would be developed most fully by Samuel Rutherford in his book *Lex, Rex* (the Law is King).

Such principles had been actively followed through in Scotland. In 1565, nobles took up arms against Mary Queen of Scots in the Chaseabout Raid, after Mary formally declared Henry, Lord Darnley, to be the King of Scots. While the rebellion was unsuccessful at this time, there was a different conclusion after the murder of Darnley in 1567 and the Queen’s hasty marriage to the man widely believed to be responsible for the murder. Ultimately, Mary was declared to be a tyrant and forced to abdicate. This action caused great controversy across Europe and demonstrated that the most radical principles of democracy anywhere at that time were emanating from within the Church of Scotland. George Buchanan outlined them cogently in his highly influential book published in 1579, *The Law of Government Among the Scots*, one of the most significant political treatises ever to be written. The Reformers had their difficulties with Mary Queen of Scots and her Romanism, which meant at times that the Reformation seemed not only to be impeded but in potential jeopardy, yet events in the affair of the murder of Darnley were to be guided by providence to the firm establishment of the Reformation in Scotland.

**4. A Covenanted Nation.** The Reformation in Scotland progressed through a series of covenants or bands whereby influential leaders endeavouring Reformation bound themselves together in a mutual oath. Their spirit was that of Nehemiah: “We are in great distress; and because of all this, we make a sure covenant and write it” (Neh 9:37,38). The first covenant of the

<sup>4</sup>M’Crie, *Sketches of Scottish Church History*, p 69.

Reformation was taken shortly after Knox's return to Scotland in 1555. "The Common or Godly Band" was sworn in 1557 by many of the chief nobles in Scotland, with similar bonds being subscribed at Perth and Edinburgh in 1559. In these documents, men committed themselves to establish the true religion and abolish all idolatry.

In the year of the Reformation, 1560, a similar covenant was sworn in April, while the Scots Confession, adopted in August, was also commonly referred to as a National Covenant. The three estates of the nation received it as "wholesome and sound doctrine grounded upon the infallible truth of God". The articles of 1567, subscribed by the Assembly and the nobility, constituted one of the most significant covenants of the Reformation period. This covenant outlined commitments to the practical implementation of the principles and benefits of the Reformation in terms of scriptural laws, care of the poor, and reformed schools and universities.

The later Covenant of 1580, which provided much of the wording of the National Covenant of 1638, was often referred to as the Negative Confession or Second Confession of Faith. Also called the King's Confession, it was subscribed first by King James and then by many nobles and gentlemen. The concept of the covenant was also present within the coronation oath drawn up by the Church, which explicitly declared that a "league and promise" should be made to the true Kirk, and a "band and contract" between the prince and God.

In this way they strove to comply with that solemn command to nations and rulers: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry" (Ps 2:10-12). The *kiss* here is that of full submission by willing subjects and is best expressed by rulers and nations swearing allegiance to Christ as "the Head of all principality and power". The benediction with which Psalm 2 closes relates to such expressions of obedience: "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him". There is another benediction that may be connected with this, of which all rulers ought to take notice: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Ps 33:12).

Covenanting is a feature of the Scottish Reformation that marks it out from the Reformations in other countries. Some writers have spoken of the difficulty of determining the source of the concept, but it is evident that it was derived from the reformations described in the Old Testament. It gave Scotland the identity and solemn obligations of a covenanted nation; the covenants also provided a banner displayed because of the truth to which the people of God could rally, uniting the generations in a common cause. They bound the posterity of the nation to recognise the deeds of their fathers with gratitude, and to forward and further the work of reformation begun. The



National Covenant represented a point of attainment to which a backsliding nation could later be recalled. John Brown of Wamphray wrote in 1665 that it was “a sweet day when the National Covenant, which had been long buried in oblivion, was raised out of the dust and renewed,” in 1638.<sup>5</sup>

**5. An Educated Nation.** Before the Reformation, only the main towns in Scotland had schools. The Reformers envisaged a school in every parish which all could attend whether poor or better off. Boys with a religious bent and intellectual capacity were sent to the nearest town school at the expense of their local kirk session in the hope that they would be future ministers of the Church.<sup>6</sup> Where the children of the poor showed sufficient aptitude they were to be encouraged to continue their studies at university. The purpose of such education was both religious and moral, as the First Book of Discipline outlined: For “seeing that men are born ignorant of all godliness . . . of necessity it is” to “be most careful for the virtuous education and godly upbringing of the youth of this realm”.

This was asserted with the strongest of motives: “if either ye now thirst unfeignedly [for] the advancement of Christ’s glory, or yet desire the continuance of His benefits to the generation following. For as the youth must succeed to us, so we ought to be careful that they have the knowledge and erudition to profit and comfort that which ought to be most dear to us – to wit, the Church and spouse of Jesus Christ.” John Davidson of Prestonpans believed that schools will “make our preachers multiply”, but “when the schools are not provided, how can the Kirk be but misguided?”<sup>7</sup>

The curriculum, which included Calvin’s *Catechism* (tested by the minister on the Sabbath afternoon), was more comprehensive and structured than previously, and those responsible for overseeing the process of education would be “the ministers and elders, with the best learned in every town, [who] shall every quarter take examination how the youth hath profited”. The schoolmaster would be paid from church funds, which would be feasible across the nation if the wealth of the pre-Reformation Roman Church had been given to the Reformed Church.

Ultimately, as is well known, the nobility would not relinquish their hold upon this wealth, and so the vision for national education was not to be properly realised for another century.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, education was placed in the hands of the Church. Parliament agreed in 1567 that all tutors or teachers

<sup>5</sup>An *Apologeticall Relation*, cited by Alasdair J N Raffe, “Religious Controversy and Scottish Society, c1679-1714”, PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2007.

<sup>6</sup>Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, Yale University Press, 2002, p 67. There were also schools for girls, p 63.

<sup>7</sup>Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, p 60.

<sup>8</sup>A total of 405 schools were, however, established before 1633 (Todd, p 60).

in either schools or universities must be “sound and able in doctrine” in order that “the youth be not infected by poisonable doctrine at the beginning, which afterwards cannot be well removed away”. Any existing tutors not professing “Christ’s true religion” were to be removed from their position. University education itself was thoroughly improved and reformed by Andrew Melville, ensuring suitable ministerial training.

Some writers such as Thomas M’Crie (senior) have compared Knox’s approach to education with that of the ancient classical republics, where children were regarded as the property of the state and to be educated at public expense.<sup>9</sup> While this may have influenced French education at the time, we are not aware of any evidence that Knox or any of the Reformers maintained such a view. We suggest rather that they were influenced by the biblical principle that Church and state have parental responsibilities as well as the family. Some speak as if none but parents have the responsibility of the education of children; others speak as if none but the state has the responsibility. The Reformers appeared to take seriously the role of all three agencies. The role of parents was to give their children religious instruction, which would be tested in their religious knowledge at the ages of 9, 12 and 14. The role of the state was to ensure that the Church’s activity was properly funded.

In 1872, after 300 years of such education, Presbyterian churches naively traded Knox’s principle of church-led schools, with a firmly Reformed ethos, in exchange for Knox’s original hope of a universal provision of education. The state’s purpose in this was to ensure an adequate workforce for an industrial age; it is not surprising therefore that religious education became marginalised. In the twenty-first century, the purpose of education is said to be preparation for life, not just the workplace.

The Reformation emphasis, however, was to impart necessary knowledge under the purpose of exhorting children to “godliness [which] is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim 4:8). This involved church-managed schools, incorporating catechetical instruction delivered by teachers committed to Reformed Protestantism. While we admire the efforts of Christian teachers and individual state schools that are notable exceptions to the rule, there is a stark contrast with today’s education system, where such teachers are in the minority among the irreligious and where teaching on vital areas of morality is expected to be anti-biblical. Today, the only church-led schools in Scotland are counter-Reformational, predominantly inculcating Romanist dogma.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>*The Life of John Knox*, Philadelphia, 1839, p 161.

<sup>10</sup>The new Curriculum for Excellence, for instance, contains entirely vague requirements for Religious and Moral Education. There is a separate Roman Catholic provision, however, which ensures instruction in the mass and Mariolatry.

# Mount Sinai and Mount Zion<sup>1</sup>

*John Duncan*

**J**ehovah, He is the God. He is a wonderful God, He is a wonder-working God. God quickens the dead; God opens the blind eyes and unstops the deaf ears; and the quickened soul has a voice wherewith to respond to the call: “Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not”. And the opened ear can hear the voice which says, “Look”; and the opened eye can look.

I have been lately, and methinks I still am, at the foot of *Mount Sinai*; and I heard a voice, and the voice spoke of wrath – the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. God thundered with His voice. Who thunders with a voice like Him? I heard the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, concerning which the Scriptures say, “So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake”.

And the Lord showed me a biography – a biography written defectively in the memory, which at the best is ever treacherous, but written perfectly in the book of God’s remembrance. And the voice said, Come and read this biography. I said, O Lord, how can I read it?

I have read it, said God, and you must; you must. And when I had looked, still the voice came: Turn thee yet again, and I will show thee greater abominations than these. And not a biography only: He showed me a heart. There are seven abominations in a man’s heart – seven being the Scripture number for completeness. And my eye was fixed on that with horror. I speak not now of godly sorrow and repentance, but of horror; and with something that is surely worse, with shame. For it was not simply my eye that fixed on the heart, but God showing me His own eye looking on it: See thy sin under My eye; see, My eye sees that. God be merciful to me a sinner!

Now I heard a voice, at first distant and mysterious; but it came nearer: a still, small voice publishing peace, proclaiming salvation; a voice which came from *Mount Zion*, the city of our solemnities, the city of our God; a voice publishing peace, proclaiming the salvation which came from Zion; a voice which, as it proclaimed salvation, so also a Saviour: “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, for unto you is born . . . in the city of David, a Saviour,” and not merely a Saviour, and a Saviour on earth – Immanuel, God with us, God among us, God for us – but a Saviour slain.

<sup>1</sup>An address at the Lord’s table in Free St Luke’s church, Edinburgh, on 27 January 1861, by the noted Old Testament Professor at New College. Taken, with slight editing from Duncan’s *Pulpit and Communion Table*.

Methought then I stood on *Calvary* and heard these words: "It is finished". God said, Look into the heart of Christ and behold Him in His vicarious death. Behold Him and know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, "that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich". The greatest depth of this poverty was not in His incarnation – though that was a wondrous depth – look at it in His death.

Then methought also that God said, Come by the blood to the mercy seat. And I heard a voice speak from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. And what voice was that? "This is My beloved Son (not merely *with whom*, but) in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him!" said He from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake", said He from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins," said He from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. "Return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee," said He from the mercy seat, from between the cherubim. Sweet invitation to me, a departer, is: "Return unto Me"; God assigning to the sinner the saving cause – "for I have redeemed thee".

Then methought the Lord said, "I know heart secrets". And I said, Lord, show me a heart which Thou knowest. And methought the Lord showed me a heart. Whose it was He did not say, and I do not know; but a heart which God knows. He showed me something of it.

It was a heart into which He had put a new song. The soul was making melody, attempting to make melody to the Lord. Where it was I do not know, but I heard it singing about the middle of its song. It had been singing other songs before this. It had been singing, "What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit?" It had been singing the fifty-first Psalm; and Jehovah had put a new song into its mouth. He had done it, and it was trying to sing; and I heard it in the middle of its song. It had been reading Revelation 5, and trying to sing some of its lines; and now it was at these words, "For thou wast slain". And O, how it was sobbing and breaking; how it was melting and breaking with a joyous grief, and a grievous joy! It could not get its song sung, though it would have liked it. O how it faltered when it tried to sing, "and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood"!

It was the song of a soul known to God; and many such there are. It was the song of one to whom much had been forgiven, and who therefore loved much; and many such there are. But it was the song of the chief of sinners, of the one to whom most had been forgiven and who loved most.

Yet it faltered and made wrong music; it jarred, and there was discord; and it grated on its own ear and pained it. And God was listening to it – the omniscient God, who knows all things. But the song was presented through

and by the Mediator of the new covenant; and if there was discord, it was removed by grace in atoning blood, by the sweet accents of intercession; for it came up as music in Jehovah's ear, melody to the Lord. It was not discord in heaven.

I would know, O God, what soul that is! O God, let that soul be mine! And tell me of it. Let it be mine! Put a new song into my mouth; teach me to sing it. Teach me to sing it on earth, and to sing it when earth shall be no more.

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## The Pharisee and the Publican<sup>1</sup>

*J Julius Wood*

Luke 18:14. *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

**I**n the parable of which these words are the conclusion, Jesus Christ told of a Pharisee and a publican who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisees were the strictest sect of the Jews, great professors and, for the most part, full of self-righteous pride. The publicans were the tax gatherers for the Roman government; and as their profit depended on what they could collect over and above the sum which they had agreed to pay the government, they very generally used every means in their power, whether just or unjust, to wring money from those who paid the taxes. They were consequently thoroughly detested by the Jews and were, for the most part, persons of very bad character. But the worst are not beyond the grace of God. Indeed, there is more hope of one whom all count to be sinful, and who so counts himself, than of a self-conceited, self-righteous person.

Our Lord represents both the Pharisee and the publican as praying. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed thus, "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

The prayer of the publican was different. He, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner". Mark how Jesus judged these two men: "I tell you, that this man [the publican] went down to his house justified rather than the other [the Pharisee]" – words which unquestionably mean that the publican was accepted and justified, while the Pharisee was rejected and his religious services held in abhorrence.

<sup>1</sup>Taken, with editing, from *The Christian's Daily Companion*. Wood (1800-1877) was at this time minister of New Greyfriars' church in Edinburgh.

On what grounds was this judgement made, and how is it consistent with the whole tenor of God's revealed will? Observe the attitude and conduct of the two men. When the Pharisee went to pray, he stood by himself, apart from the other worshippers, to mark the opinion he entertained of his own superior sanctity – to draw attention to himself and to attract other people's admiration. His prayer agreed well with his behaviour when he came to offer it. It was nothing but praise of himself. There was not one expression in it, or even one hint, that he who offered it up was a sinner, a humble dependent on the mercy of an offended God. He looked at himself and said to God, Behold what I am! He never thought of God's mercy in connection with himself. He had no feeling that he needed mercy; he thought he deserved favour.

And, after all, what did the good amount to that he had to relate of himself? Freedom from some few gross sins and the scrupulous observance of one or two minor matters of the law. Marvellous folly, that a man who has no more to say for himself than this should trust in himself that he is righteous, and despise others!

The publican stood afar off, probably in the court of the Gentiles, as unworthy of a place among God's chosen people, and especially as unfit to stand near that eminent saint, the Pharisee. Thus shrinking from observation and his heart almost sunk under a feeling of his sinfulness, he would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven. He felt as David, that man of God, did when he poured out his prayer: "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me". But though he would not lift up his eyes, by grace he was enabled to lift up his soul; and as he smote on his breast in bitter grief, he prayed from his very heart: "God be merciful to me, a sinner".

The whole scope of Scripture, and many express statements in it, teach us that it is God's method of salvation to make the sinner deeply conscious of his sinfulness, to convince him that he cannot save himself, and to show him that God can save him and is willing to save him, through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ. Now not one of these things was found in the Pharisee. He had no deep conviction of his sinfulness; he was not at all aware of his inability to save himself; he had no apprehension of God's pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace. In the publican, on the contrary, they all appear. He saw the corruption of his heart and the transgressions of his life to be far beyond any remedy that he could apply. And because he had been taught that there is forgiveness with God, he presented himself at a throne of grace earnestly desiring to be a partaker of that forgiveness.

Therefore the condemnation of the Pharisee and the justification of the publican entirely agree with the Bible method of salvation, for Jesus says,

“Everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted”. The Saviour repeated no sentiment so frequently as this. We find it recorded no fewer than ten times in the Gospels. It is no doubt intended to teach us the importance which our Lord attaches to evangelical humiliation, which lies at the very entrance into a state of grace. The sinner who, like the publican, stands self-condemned, grieving for his sinfulness and crying for mercy, God receives in at the strait gate that leads unto life. To such a person He says, “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee”. Then, in the exercise of free sovereign grace, He begins to exalt the poor sinner who has been abased by evangelical humiliation. He unites the sinner to Christ, bestowing on him the privileges and dignity of a child of God, and at last receives him to perfect happiness and heavenly glory.

On the other hand, pride, and especially the pride of self-righteousness, is exceedingly offensive to God, for it is a plain denial of man’s fallen and ruined condition, and of the usefulness and necessity of that amazing plan which has been devised for the recovery of sinners. Pride puts man in a position in which he does not desire, and will not accept, the salvation which God offers. And it makes God a liar, for He declares that there is none righteous, no not one, and that all the imaginations of the thoughts of man’s heart are only evil continually. The man who possesses this self-righteous spirit indeed exalts himself, but what a humbling awaits him! He will be stripped of his foolish ideas and cast down to hell, a miserable, hopeless wretch, to dwell with devils and everlasting burnings.

Let me pray: “Lord, make me know myself. Make me understand Thy character as revealed in the Scriptures. Then I will lie low before Thee as a sinner; my prayer will be for mercy, for Christ’s sake; Thou wilt hear the prayer, and receive me graciously, and love me freely, and bless me abundantly.”

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We may have as free access to the Redeemer now as His immediate disciples had. Faith does not require a visible Saviour for its object, but the blessing is rather on those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Convictions from the holy law of God do commonly precede a true change of heart and are not to be lightly esteemed, for, to all human appearance, the convinced sinner is much nigher to the kingdom of heaven than the careless sinner. It is well for such as are under such impressions, as they regard their own salvation, to do nothing to quench the Spirit, who is striving with them.

That the majority of men possess very inadequate ideas of the evil of sin is evident from their contentment under its defilement.

In the dark and cloudy day of adversity, when thick clouds gather around us and water-spouts burst upon us and all [God’s] billows go over us, what will be our condition unless we have a refuge from trouble in God?

*Archibald Alexander*

# The Peace Offering<sup>1</sup>

*Henry Law*

Leviticus 3:1 *A Sacrifice of Peace-offering.*

“On earth peace!” Thus angels’ lips announce the Saviour’s birth. Peace comes, lives, thrives with Christ. “On earth peace!” Such is the olive branch which these brief lines would wave. “On earth peace!” Great Spirit, plant it in each reader’s heart!

God strives in every way to bring poor sinners to His peaceful sway. Before the worlds, eternal councils planned the way of peace. When enmity began, grace hastened to reveal it. A stream of prophecy rolled the news onward. And here a graphic ordinance portrays it. A model stands to show the parts and working of the reconciling scheme.

Some anxious soul sighs for felt peace with God. What shall be done? God smooths the way. His voice declares, Let the appeasing victim be now brought. Peace rightly sought shall surely be obtained. Now mark this victim. It may be male or female. It may be taken from the larger cattle, or from sheep or goats (Lev 3:1,6,12). This is permission of unwonted breadth. The prince or the peasant, from richest pastures or bare mountain’s brow, may readily obtain the expiating means.

The aim is both gracious and distinct. Where is the man, who would have peace with God? No barrier keeps him back. No distant search is needed. The appointed offering is by his threshold. The soul at every moment may find Christ. The hand may grasp Him at each turn. He is the nearest object to the rich man’s hall. He sits beside each Lazarus at the gate. He is ever present, ever willing. No sinner pines in wretchedness because the peace offering is beyond his reach. The burden of the gospel cry is: Behold Me; take Me.

But from whatever flock the male or female came, one test must prove it. It must be free from fault. A blameless type proclaims the blameless Lord. He is the essence of pure excellence. He was made flesh without corruption’s taint. His walk on earth was holy as His throne in heaven. If but one speck had soiled Him, it would have turned God’s smile into a frown. To have bought favour for Himself would then have cost His all. But His hands are sinless; therefore they can take our sins. He needs no payment for Himself, and so can buy our peace. Such are the marks of the peace offering.

God next directs the offerer to touch its head (Lev 3:2). This act denotes the transfer of all guilt. The burdened thus rolls off his load. The lightened shoulder thus receives relief. This is the happiest exercise of faith. It knows

<sup>1</sup>Taken, with editing, from *The Gospel in Leviticus*.



that Christ is called and comes and dies to take His people's guilt. It sees Him ever ready to receive the weight. With rapid step it ventures near. With eager hand it casts off misery. The unburdened conscience grasps deliverance.

Believer, why should you lie in dust, oppressed and crushed by fears? Why are your eyes so dull to see heart ease? Hark, the peace offering presents Himself. Christ calls, Give me your every sin; transmit the mass of it to Me; I will remove it, so that God no more shall find it. Wrong not your soul; obey. There is no peace while sin-distress weighs down. There is all peace when the huge mountains of it sink. The sting extracted leaves no pain.

The victim is then slain (Lev 3:2). Here is the wondrous fact, which is the light of types and rites and prophecies and solemn texts. Here is the brightest sunshine of the Bible page. Death is denounced as the desert of sin. But, through amazing grace, it falls on Christ. He claims the dying place. He gives His life to the avenging stroke. Each blood-besprinkled altar preached a peace thus bought. It told of satisfying agony and reconciling blood and an accepted surety. It showed the price all paid, the wrath removed, the curse endured, the flock all free. Reader, you often hear and read this blessed truth. Say, is this peace-procuring work the perfect rest of your reposing soul? Do you sit down beneath the cross and sing, The enmity died there?

The slaughtered animal was then divided. The best, the choicest, of the parts were placed upon the burning altar. Devouring flames preyed on them (Lev 3:3-5). Another portion was the priest's own due (Lev 7:31,32). The rest supplied the offerer with food. Here is a wondrous feast. Three parties are regaled. O my soul, you too are called. The gospel banquet has an open door. Each hungry soul may find a welcome seat.

1. God claims His share. All that seems rich and precious is first brought to Him. The holy fire reduces it to dust. It is the fuel of the raging blaze. Thus Jesus meets the fierceness of Jehovah's wrath. Thus every attribute is filled, as an overflowing cup. Justice exacts its dues. Anger and righteous vengeance and pledged truth have large demands. But are they not content when they have revelled at this costly board? God's name is honoured in a God-man slain: and heaven takes up a hymn of peace. Reader, place Christ, in faith, between God and your sins, and then live, joy, work, die in the sweet knowledge that God's scales are full.

2. Provision is then made for those who ministered. The altar-servant never lacks. They who leave all for God have all in God. Zeal in His cause is richest gain. The Lord is never debtor unto man. Strength spent for Him is strength recruited with the best supplies. Toil in His vineyard is the wealth of wealth. His service is a golden mine. It is a field where harvests always wave. Each happy workman finds his wages in his work.

But mark what constitutes the priestly food. It is part of the selfsame victim in which God delights. The dying Jesus regales heaven. The dying Jesus regales earth. But the refreshment mainly cheers the pastor's heart. Here then we clearly learn that ministers derive their health, their vigour, their success, from the grand truth of peace through Christ. They cannot work with zeal, with unction and with fervent love who have not tasted this substantial feast. Knowledge of reconciling grace is the grand pulpit power. It warms the heart. It girds the loins. It arms with courage which no difficulties check. It brings an energy which cannot flag.

Ministers, live at this table. Joy in the victim, who slays wrath and opens wide the gates of peace. And then, strong in the Lord and tranquil in His love, go, toil, strive, pray, till thronging numbers crowd the banquet house where Christ is all.

3. The offerer then takes his part and eats. Here is a teaching fact. We see the essence of true faith. It finds soul sustenance in Jesus' work. Light in the head will not give peace. Lips may be fluent in Christ's praise while all within is death. The outward handling of truth lulls not what the conscience fears. More is required. Christ to be peace must be received within. The hungry soul must draw sweet juices from the dying Lamb. Wretched are they who mourn and pine and starve when such supplies are near!

A solemn warning is adjoined. The legally unclean might not partake (Lev 7:20). Impurity excluded from the table of peace. Means are provided to cleanse stains. But means neglected raise exclusion's bar. They are cast out who seek the wedding with no wedding robe (Mt 22:13).

Reader, this precept loudly testifies that none taste peace who willfully offend. Sin willingly retained must plunge into a troubled sea. Can Israel prosper while accursed goods are hid? Can he gain health who lingers in infected air? Shall he reap a calm who sows the whirlwind? The path of evil leads from peace. The love of evil hides God's smile.

But the believer hourly mourns that sad corruption follows, as his shadow. He loathes iniquity, but still its roots are deep, and constant outbreaks prove its life. His thoughts, his words, his works fly as vile broods from a vile nest. May he not venture to the peace-offering feast while this indwelling evil is his plague? The ordinance foresees the case and thus provides. Unleavened cakes must fill the offerer's hand (Lev 7:12). This leaven is the emblem of the tainting principle. Its presence teaches that sinners may draw near, although the hated trouble be not dead.

Reader, if you have any light from heaven, you see poor nature's proneness to transgress. While flesh is flesh, its tendencies are base. This malady should not obstruct your way to peace. No, let it prompt you to more vigorous

effort. When the wolf prowls, the lambs leave not the fold. Your restless foe should drive you to the fort of peace.

We next are told what special motives prompted the peace offering. They were twofold: a sense of gratitude for mercies past, and a desire to bind the heart by vow (Lev 7:12,16). He who would praise, he who would vow, thus sought the altar. Here are spiritual dealings which cannot be performed until the soul knows peace with God. These are plants which only bloom in reconciliation's sunshine. These are ships which only glide on tranquil waves.

Believer, let not this teaching be in vain. There is no moment when the inner man should not flow forth in boundless streams of praise. Count, if you can – but the number baffles thought – the crowning mercies which fill high your cup. Each mercy should awaken songs of love.

Next weigh your mighty debts to God. He ever lives, pouring His blessings on your head. Each binds you to devote your all to His one service. His throne should ever hear your self-surrendering vows. But mark, you cannot praise or vow apart from peace in Christ. These are the acts of an accepted child. This is free converse with a reconciled Father. Praise only lives where peace abounds. He only consecrates himself who fears no wrath. You must draw near in Christ, or you can never serve.

When the peace offering came as token of thanksgiving, it must be eaten before morrow's light. When it bare witness to a voluntary vow, the rule was still the same. The feast must be without delay. No remnant on the third day might be touched (Lev 7:15,16). Who can hear this and not discern the tenderness of grace? God would not leave one moment's space between the cross and peace. The gospel cry is, Rejoice, rejoice! Why tarry? Why linger? Why hesitate? What mean those miserable doubts? Wherefore such trembling and reluctant steps? God spreads a feast of peace, and bids His guests sit down to instant joy.

Believer, hasten to obey. Today, this hour, receive the gladness of the proffered blessing. There is some lurking pride, some seeds of unbelief, in slow acceptance of this gracious boon.

Reader, this offering was ordained "to guide your feet into the way of peace." Come then to the standard of the Prince of Peace. Is not His kingdom peace above, within, around, for ever? The Spirit cries, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Is 9:7). Hear and the Lord of peace Himself will give you peace always by all means (2 Th 3:16).

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The law leads us to Christ for righteousness; the gospel sends us to the law as a rule of obedience, as a light to our feet and a lamp to our hearts. Thus the whole life and work of a Christian is a continual traffic from the law to the gospel, and from the gospel back again to the law as a rule.

*Ebenezer Erskine*

**FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND - CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS - 2011**

CONGREGATION	MINISTER (Interim Moderator)*	SUSTENTATION FUND	HOME MISSION FUND	COLLEGE & LIBRARY FUND	BOOKROOM FUND	GENERAL BUILDING FUND	OUTREACH FUND	JEWISH & FOREIGN MISS'N FUND	DOMINIANS & OVERSEAS FUND	TOTAL
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£

**NORTHERN PRESBYTERY**

Aberdeen	Rev D W B Somerset	7,394.75	25.64	106.41	25.64	25.64	31.28	140.51	25.64	7,775.51
Creich, Dornoch, etc	Rev G G Hutton*	6,641.01	109.21	172.00	81.00	46.00	84.00	762.62	197.41	8,093.25
Daviot, Tomatin & Stratherrick	Rev G G Hutton*	2,123.98	213.37	207.44	136.87	138.51	201.28	539.81	208.42	3,769.68
Dingwall & Beaully	Rev N M Ross	15,184.93	501.82	890.67	335.72	390.02	356.92	1,659.31	607.92	19,927.31
Halkirk, Strathy, Thurso & Wick	Rev N M Ross*	7,025.21	210.00	355.00	165.00	155.00	65.00	590.00	155.00	8,720.21
Inverness	Rev G G Hutton	19,275.80	686.49	858.37	486.23	462.23	924.82	2,419.33	479.32	25,592.59
Kinlochbervie & Scourie	Rev N M Ross*	2,493.35	187.56	272.56	103.46	173.46	94.87	1,227.18	180.64	4,733.08
		60,139.03	1,934.09	2,862.45	1,333.92	1,390.86	1,758.17	7,338.76	1,854.35	78,611.63

**SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY**

Barnoldswick	Rev J MacLeod*	10,145.97	152.38	456.38	274.97	403.64	166.09	1,544.75	294.77	13,438.95
Broadstairs	Rev J MacLeod*	6,410.26	-	320.51	-	-	-	320.51	-	7,051.28
Chesley	Rev R MacLeod*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dundee, Perth & Stirling	Rev J L Goldby*	3,609.86	275.90	503.46	197.31	200.90	198.72	408.21	202.31	5,596.67
Edinburgh	Rev R MacLeod*	17,500.00	270.00	1,150.00	340.00	290.00	450.00	1,100.00	300.00	21,400.00
Fort William & Oban	Rev R MacLeod*	490.00	30.00	40.00	10.00	30.00	80.00	55.00	60.00	795.00
Glasgow	Rev R MacLeod	24,666.70	1,959.66	2,160.66	1,639.47	1,270.23	1,016.08	5,103.07	1,595.78	39,411.05
Greenock (Preaching Station)	Rev R MacLeod	1,062.68	289.23	178.85	290.64	26.41	20.00	438.08	187.82	2,493.71
Larne	Rev J L Goldby	1,920.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	30.00	50.00	20.00	2,100.00
London	Rev J MacLeod	22,552.77	235.00	2,108.08	96.15	66.15	66.15	800.38	107.15	26,031.83
Santa Fe, Texas	Rev J MacLeod*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		88,358.24	3,232.17	6,937.34	2,868.54	2,307.33	2,027.04	9,820.00	2,767.83	118,318.49

**OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY**

Achmore	Rev J R Tallach	2,845.39	353.33	118.21	115.64	104.74	106.15	386.03	91.15	4,120.64
Breascleite (Mission Station)	Rev J R Tallach*	720.00	45.00	90.00	60.00	40.00	65.00	250.00	75.00	1,345.00
Ness	Rev A W MacColl	9,770.78	93.46	320.00	30.00	5.00	40.00	189.74	50.00	10,498.98
North Harris	Rev J B Jardine	8,820.76	118.26	280.67	116.31	122.85	116.85	279.62	161.92	10,017.24
North Tolsta	Rev D Campbell	13,655.82	857.31	785.08	456.87	518.47	428.59	1,704.17	595.64	19,001.95
North Uist	Rev D Macdonald	9,636.75	339.49	495.00	261.79	323.85	266.79	942.69	306.67	12,573.03
South Harris	Rev K D Macleod	11,387.44	363.76	1,184.04	328.56	361.92	287.71	1,132.54	353.46	15,399.43
Stornoway	Rev J R Tallach	25,983.28	1,238.08	1,536.33	949.79	920.54	832.77	2,954.36	877.90	35,293.05
Uig	Rev D Campbell*	3,124.00	76.00	157.00	91.00	94.00	-	189.00	76.00	3,807.00
		85,944.22	3,484.69	4,966.33	2,409.96	2,491.37	2,143.86	8,028.15	2,587.74	112,056.32

## WESTERN PRESBYTERY

Applecross & Shieldaig	Rev D A Ross*	2,951.39	193.21	494.62	101.15	106.15	126.15	414.62	126.15	4,513.44
Assynt	Rev A E W MacDonald*	1,741.03	74.10	66.92	45.64	20.00	2.82	296.41	45.64	2,292.56
Bracadale & Strath	Rev J B Jardine*	2,700.00	110.00	88.00	83.00	83.00	80.00	108.00	84.00	3,336.00
Duirinish	Rev J B Jardine*	2,570.00	95.00	152.00	58.00	69.00	44.00	479.00	89.00	3,556.00
Gairloch	Rev A E W MacDonald	8,666.28	177.51	220.03	204.51	153.51	314.69	540.44	134.62	10,411.59
Kyle, Plockton & Lochcarron	Rev D A Ross*	4,402.50	330.00	630.00	330.00	330.00	330.00	630.00	330.00	7,312.50
Laide	Rev D A Ross	7,000.00	200.00	130.00	110.00	90.00	130.00	230.00	120.00	8,010.00
Lochbroom	Rev A E W MacDonald*	6,429.80	145.10	550.21	114.10	124.10	117.10	317.85	159.10	7,957.36
Odessa, Ukraine	Rev D A Ross*	-	-	300.00	-	-	-	-	-	300.00
Portree	Rev W A Weale*	13,270.20	590.38	660.00	350.00	300.00	350.00	1,006.54	330.00	16,857.12
Raasay	Rev W A Weale*	2,575.39	79.23	58.46	82.23	54.23	105.73	171.46	94.23	3,220.96
Staffin	Rev W A Weale	11,854.42	240.69	554.36	278.51	230.46	251.69	586.40	244.74	14,241.27
		<b>64,161.01</b>	<b>2,235.22</b>	<b>3,904.60</b>	<b>1,757.14</b>	<b>1,560.45</b>	<b>1,852.18</b>	<b>4,780.72</b>	<b>1,757.48</b>	<b>82,008.80</b>

## AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY

Auckland	Rev J D Smith	NZD 7,500.00 ~	-	200.00	100.00	-	-	582.00	100.00	982.00
Gisborne	Rev J D Smith*	NZD 10,900.00 ~	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grafton	Rev E A Rayner	AUD 42,503.00 ~	-	-	-	-	-	709.63	709.63	1,419.26
Singapore	Rev G B Macdonald*	NZD 5,880.29 ~	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sydney	Rev G B Macdonald	AUD 47,873.08 ~	-	320.17	-	320.17	-	640.34	640.34	1,921.02
Tauranga	Rev J D Smith*	NZD 1,200.00 ~	-	25.00	-	50.00	-	25.00	50.00	150.00
Wellington	Rev G B Macdonald*	NZD 2,160.00 ~	-	47.67	23.84	23.84	47.67	47.67	95.34	286.03
			-	<b>592.84</b>	<b>123.84</b>	<b>394.01</b>	<b>47.67</b>	<b>2,004.64</b>	<b>1,595.31</b>	<b>4,758.31</b>

~These sums were contributed to the local Australia & New Zealand Sustentation Funds. They do not appear in any of the totals here.

## SUMMARY

Northern Presbytery		60,139.03	1,934.09	2,862.45	1,333.92	1,390.86	1,758.17	7,338.76	1,854.35	78,611.63
Southern Presbytery		88,358.24	3,232.17	6,937.34	2,868.54	2,307.33	2,027.04	9,820.00	2,767.83	118,318.49
Outer Isles Presbytery		85,944.22	3,484.69	4,966.33	2,409.96	2,491.37	2,143.86	8,028.15	2,587.74	112,056.32
Western Presbytery		64,161.01	2,235.22	3,904.60	1,757.14	1,560.45	1,852.18	4,780.72	1,757.48	82,008.80
Australia & New Zealand Presbytery	~(See note above)	-	-	592.84	123.84	394.01	47.67	2,004.64	1,595.31	4,758.31
<b>TOTAL CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>		<b>298,602.50</b>	<b>10,886.17</b>	<b>19,263.56</b>	<b>8,493.40</b>	<b>8,144.02</b>	<b>7,828.92</b>	<b>31,972.27</b>	<b>10,562.71</b>	<b>395,753.55</b>
Other Donations		20.00	-	3,413.25	100.00	-	16.18	29,551.00	4.00	33,104.43
<b>SPECIAL COLLECTIONS TOTALS</b>		<b>298,622.50</b>	<b>10,886.17</b>	<b>22,676.81</b>	<b>8,593.40</b>	<b>8,144.02</b>	<b>7,845.10</b>	<b>61,523.27</b>	<b>10,566.71</b>	<b>428,857.98</b>
Eastern Europe Fund Donations										15,848.68
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>										<b>444,706.66</b>

# A Communion Service

*John Kennedy*

## ***Fencing the Table.***<sup>1</sup>

Psalm 84:10. *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.* This tells of attachment to the means of grace.

Some go to public means and neglect private.

Some come merely because it is the habit.

Some came to gag conscience.

Some come to hear because they have aching ears.

But others come because the means are divinely appointed,

because the Lord has promised his presence,

because of experience and the benefit found there.

Isaiah 58:13. They *call the Sabbath a delight.*

Because it is a memorial of God's and Christ's rest.

It must be actually honoured and kept holy.

There are many kinds of Sabbath breaking.

Those who wilfully break the Sabbath are debarred.

Acts 9:11. *He prayeth.*

There is no life without this.

Spiritual life begins its exercise and it continues to the end.

These are living souls going up to God.

1 John 3:14. *We love the brethren.*

There is brotherly love, and there are counterfeits.

We should love the brethren out of love to Christ.

Loving them because of resemblance to Christ.

## ***Table Address.***

Christ's love to the Church is set forth in assuming her nature.

He did so to redeem her from the curse of the broken law.

This is and must be free love; it cannot be bought.

It is divine love; it is the Saviour's love.

This love is to sinners; it is infinite love.

This love redeems to the praise of divine grace.

This is the love that believers are invited to come to.

Its embrace is assured to all who come to God through Christ.

## ***Conclusion.***

Has this love found you? It is a husband's love.

<sup>1</sup>An address before the Lord's Supper which is intended to indicate who should come to the Lord's table and who should not.

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Have you come to trust in it for all that you need?  
This is changeless love; it is love that begets love.  
Seek to know it now, to trust more, to yield more.

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## Book Review

*The Dairyman's Daughter, and Other Annals of the Poor*, by Leigh Richmond, published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, paperback, 163 pages, £6.50, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

Leigh Richmond (1772-1827) was for some time a Church of England minister in the Isle of Wight. These accounts of his contacts with poor people there had a huge circulation within just a few years. The present publishers have had this book on their list for many years but, for this edition, the type has been reset. It is altogether more attractive and has some pictures of places where the people lived whose experiences Richmond describes.

Most prominent is Elizabeth, the daughter of a dairyman. Richmond records her experience under a sermon on: "Be ye clothed with humility". He quotes her words: "I felt a powerful discovery of the nakedness of my own soul, I saw that I had neither the humility mentioned in the text nor any one part of the true Christian character. . . . [The minister] opened the riches of divine grace in God's method of saving the sinner. . . . He represented Christ as 'Wisdom'; I felt my ignorance. He held Him forth as 'Righteousness'; I was convinced of my own guilt. He proved Him to be 'Sanctification'; I saw my corruption. He proclaimed Him as 'Redemption'; I felt my slavery to sin." Afterwards she exclaimed: "What a Saviour I have found! He is more than I could ask or desire. In His fullness I have found all that my poverty could need; in His bosom I have found a resting place from all sin and sorrow."

The second account is of Jane, a member of a class Richmond conducted for local children on Saturday afternoons. Her spiritual experience also is detailed until the time came when, still young, she went "from a bed of straw to the bosom of Abraham".

Next we have the story of an African, a former slave, then the servant of a naval officer, who was introduced to Richmond because he had "a great desire to be baptized". In response to Richmond's question: "What is your faith?" he answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and though me be the chief of sinners, yet Jesus will save me".

The book provides profitable, interesting reading. It has much to teach us about the power of God to impress spiritual realities deeply on the hearts of sinners. Young people, in particular, might find it highly useful.

# Notes and Comments

## Councils and Prayer

Again and again we hear of atheists attempting to use the law to prevent religious observance in various contexts. Most recently an atheist councillor took Bideford Town Council, in Devon, to court in an effort to prevent prayer being offered at the beginning of Council meetings, a practice which is understood to date back to the time of Queen Elizabeth I. Incredibly, the Judge ruled that prayers were not lawful because the Local Government Act of 1972 made no provision for them; probably at that time everyone would have assumed that it was entirely legitimate for prayer to be offered at any meeting of a public body.

Thankfully the Judge ruled that human-rights arguments were not relevant to the case and accepted that there could be prayer, provided it was not part of the formal meeting. But it should have been obvious to him that no council needs statutory authority to seek God's blessing and direction in prayer. God's authority is altogether higher than that of Parliament. But chilly, secular winds have been blowing ever more strongly through our national life. Lord Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury has remarked that the Christian faith is facing "gradual marginalisation". And even a BBC religious affairs correspondent, Robert Pigott, has commented: "By and large, judges have been unsympathetic to the Christian case . . . The tide has been flowing pretty firmly against Christianity in public."

He further notes: "There is a lot of concern that this is not just about pure religion but this is about some of the values that underpin the British way of life". But such people want to have the outward benefits of a Christian heritage without the spiritual realities which underpin that heritage. It is rather ironic that at the meeting of Bideford Town Council on the evening before the Court ruling, prayer was replaced by "two minutes of reflective silence" conducted by a Quaker – something utterly meaningless; it ignores the fact that the Most High is a prayer-hearing God.

In fact, the atheist's Court victory looks rather hollow. Eric Pickles, Communities Secretary in the UK Government, has stated that his "Localism Act now gives councils a general power of competence – which allows them to undertake any general action that an individual could do unless it is specifically prohibited by law. Logically, this includes prayers before meetings." He hopes to have the specific authority for prayer at council meetings in place within a week of the Court ruling. But whatever developments the future may bring, "the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters" (Ps 93:4).



## Medical Research and Evolution

Huge amounts of money are committed to research on cancer every year. A Government agency in the United States has a budget of \$5 billion, while that of Cancer Research UK is £500 million. Yet, “despite this vast investment, the long-awaited breakthrough remains elusive”, according to Paul Davies, director of a research centre in Arizona, writing in *The Daily Telegraph*.

“The basic story of cancer is very simple”, he states. “Somewhere in the body, cells start to proliferate uncontrollably. If unchecked, they spread to other organs and colonise them. At that stage, the patient’s prospects are grim. Yet nobody has a convincing explanation for why this happens.”

It was in the hope that he could bring a fresh perspective to cancer research that Professor Davies, a physicist, was appointed to head the Arizona centre. Yet his fresh thinking seems to have taken him particularly in the direction of exploring evolutionary theories for new ideas, and a significant proportion of his article is occupied with expounding what is alleged to have happened in the development of living creatures hundreds of millions of years ago. This leads him and an Australian colleague to the conclusion that “cancer may be a reversion to a tried-and-tested ancestral lifestyle in response to a physical stress such as a carcinogen”.

They further conclude that “by connecting the dots of evolutionary development and cancer biology we have come to view cancer not so much as a disease to be cured as a condition to be controlled”. The writer of this note is in no position to deny that this may be a fruitful way of looking at the problem and that future cancer sufferers may be helped as a result. But one thing should be clear: any such benefits will not result from the evolutionary presuppositions. These are false. Life on earth did not evolve; it was created. That is the testimony of the Bible, which is entirely dependable, being the inspired Word of God. Cancer is not an evolutionary left-over; it is one aspect of the dislocation in nature which resulted from the Fall (although cancer is not normally the result of an individual’s sin).

One fears that evolutionary thinking is leading many researchers – not least in medicine – down sidetracks which lead them away from attaining their objectives. The overall result almost certainly is that research effort is being wasted and that treatments are not being developed which otherwise might be. To pay attention to God’s revelation in Scripture would have helpful consequences in more ways than most people realise.

## The Dalai Lama in Inverness

The Dalai Lama is due to visit Scotland in June and to speak in Inverness at the Eden Court Theatre on Saturday 23rd. The 1300 tickets for this event

were sold out within a day of the announcement. The Dalai Lama's visit to Scotland is supported by the National Library of Scotland and by Highland Council. Such a visit, and the enthusiasm surrounding it, confirms the spiritual vacuum in Scotland at present. Men and women will not hear the gospel of Christ, and many are offended at the mere mention of Christ's name (except in blasphemy), but they fall over themselves to hear a Buddhist monk speaking on "World Peace". As Christ foretold: "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (Jn 5:43). DWBS

### **Erosion of Psalmody in the Free Church**

The Free Church of Scotland introduced uninspired hymns into its public worship a little over a year ago. One of the anomalies of the decision was that a token psalm must be sung at each diet of public worship. As was pointed out at the time, if uninspired hymns are perfectly lawful – as the Free Church majority claim – then who gave the Free Church Assembly the right to impose the singing of even a single psalm on its congregations? The innovators seem to regard themselves as lords in the matter; and it was clear to all but the most naïve that this compulsory psalm was merely a sop to conservatives which would be withdrawn once it had served its purpose.

One congregation which embraced the new legislation was Buccleuch and Greyfriars in Edinburgh. To appease some more conservative members of the congregation, a second evening service was introduced at which only psalms were sung. It has now been found that this second evening service "created difficulties" and gave the appearance of division; so it has been abandoned. Meanwhile the morning service will henceforth follow the pattern of the recent "well-attended Christmas morning service" with hymns, musical instruments and "at least one psalm". On December 24 there was a "Carols by Candlelight" service. With such rapid changes, one fears that the Christmas tree and the crib will soon be on their way, if they have not arrived already. It is sad to see such declension in the professing Christian Church, particularly among people who were brought up to know better. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas 4:17). DWBS

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## **Church Information**

### **Jewish and Foreign Missions Fund**

By appointment of Synod, the first of the year's two special collections for the Jewish and Foreign Missions Fund is due to be taken in congregations during March.

*W Campbell*, General Treasurer

# FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

## Scotland

**Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.

**Bracadale: Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

**Breasclete:** no services meantime.

**Dingwall:** Church, Hill Street: Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. **Beauly** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev Neil M Ross BA, Dingwall, 10 Achany Rd, IV15 9JB; tel/fax: 01349 864351, e-mail: nmross2001@yahoo.co.uk.

**Dornoch:** Sabbath 11.30 am. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; **Rogart:** Church; no F P services. Contact Rev G G Hutton; tel: 01463 712872.

**Dundee:** Manse. No F P Church services.

**Edinburgh:** 63 Gilmore Place, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 0131 447 1920. Contact Mr I R MacLeod; tel: 0131 334 4057.

**Farr** (by Daviot): Sabbath 12 noon (other than second and fourth Sabbaths of month), 6 pm. Thursday 7.30 pm. **Tomatin:** second Sabbath 12 noon. **Stratherrick:** fourth Sabbath 12 noon. Contact Rev G G Hutton; tel: 01463 712872.

**Fort William:** Monzie Square, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm as intimated. Manse: 15 Perth Place, PH33 6UL; tel: 01397 708553. Contact Mr D A McKinnon. Tel: 01397 702597.

**Gairloch** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm. Prayer meeting in **Strath**, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev A E W MacDonald MA, F P Manse, Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BS; tel: 01445 712247.

**Glasgow:** St Jude's Church, 137 Woodlands Road, G3 6LE. Sabbath 11 am and 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev Roderick MacLeod BA, 4 Laurel Park Close, Glasgow, G13 1RD; tel: 0141 954 3759.

**Greenock:** 40 East Hamilton Street, Sabbath 2.30 pm.

**Halkirk:** Sabbath 11.30 am, 5 pm; Thursday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01847 831758. **Wick:** Church; **Thurso:** Church; **Strathy:** Church; no F P Church services.

**Harris (North): Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm. **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J B Jardine BD, F P Manse, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF; tel: 01859 502253, e-mail: northharris.fpc@btopenworld.com.

**Harris (South): Leverburgh:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Shellebost:** Sabbath 12 noon (except first Sabbath of month). Prayer meetings in **Leverburgh, Shellebost, Strond** and **Geocrab** as intimated. Rev K D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Leverburgh, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271.

**Inverness:** Chapel Street, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA, 11 Auldcastle Road, IV2 3PZ; tel: 01463 712872.

**Kinlochbervie:** Sabbath 11.30 am; Tuesday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01971 521268. **Scourie:** Sabbath 6 pm.

**Kyle of Lochalsh:** Sabbath 6 pm. Manse tel: 01599 534933. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.

**Laide** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev D A Ross. F P Manse, Laide, IV22 2NB; tel: 01445 731340.

**Lochcarron:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse.

**Lochinver:** Sabbath 12 noon. Manse tel: 01571 844484.

**Ness:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, HS2 0TA; tel: 01851 810228.

**North Tolsta:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm; 1st Monday of month 7 pm. Rev D Campbell MA, F P Manse, North Tolsta, HS2 0NH; tel: 01851 890286.

**North Uist: Bayhead:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). **Sollas:** Wednesday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). Rev D Macdonald BA, F P Manse, Bayhead, North Uist, HS6 5DS; tel: 01876 510233.

**Oban:** Church and Manse. No F P services at present.

**Perth:** Pomarium, off Leonard Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact Mr J N MacKinnon; tel: 01786 451386.

**Portree:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.

**Raasay:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Saturday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.

**Shieldaig:** Sabbath 11 am; **Applecross:** Sabbath 6pm. Tuesday 7 pm (alternately in Shieldaig and Applecross). Shieldaig manse tel: 01520 755259, Applecross manse tel: 01520 744411. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.

**Staffin:** Sabbath 12 noon, 5 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Staffin, IV51 9JX; tel: 01470 562243.

**Stornoway:** Matheson Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. **Achmore:** Sabbath 12 noon; Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J R Tallach MB ChB, 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501.

**Tain:** Church and Manse. **Fearn:** Church. No F P services. See Dornoch and Bonar.

**Uig (Lewis) Miavaig:** Sabbath 12 noon Gaelic, 6 pm English; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 672251.

**Ullapool:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Manse: Quay Street, IV26 2UE; tel: 01854 612449.

**Vatten:** Sabbath 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). **Glendale, Waternish:** As intimated. Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

## England

**Barnoldswick:** Kelbrook Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Friday 7.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm, alternately in Sandbach and Galley. **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Trinity Church, Massie Street, Cheadle (entry at rear of building). Contact Mr R Middleton, 2 Emerald Drive, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 4ND. Tel: 01270 761673. Manse tel: 01282 851782.

**Broadstairs:** Sabbath 11 am, 5 pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Ave, St Peter's; Tuesday 7 pm at Friends' Meeting House, St Peter's Park Rd. Contact Dr T Martin; tel: 01843 866369.

**London:** Zoar Chapel, Varden St. E1. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU. Tel: 0208 309 1623.

## Northern Ireland

**Larne:** Station Road. Sabbath 11.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J L Goldby MA, 23 Upper Cairncastle Road, Larne BT40 2EF. Tel: 02828 274865.

#### Canada

**Chesley**, Ontario: Church and Manse, 40 Fourth Street SW. Sabbath 10.30 am, 7 pm; Wednesday 8 pm. Contact: Mr David Kuiper, Tel: 519 363 0367. Manse tel: 519 363 2502.

**Toronto**, Ontario: Church and Manse. No F P Church services at present.

**Vancouver**, British Columbia: Contact: Mr John MacLeod, 202-815 4th Avenue, New Westminster, V3M 1S8. Tel: 604-516-8648.

#### USA

**Santa Fe**, Texas: Church and Manse, 4031 Jackson St 77517. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact Mr Joseph Smith, 13732 West 6th Street, Santa Fe, 77517. Tel: 409 927 1564. Manse tel: 409 925 1315.

#### Australia

**Grafton**, NSW: 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev E A Rayner BA, 23 Nairn Terrace, Junction Hill 2460 (mail to: PO Box 1171 Grafton, 2460). Tel: 02 6644 6044.

**Sydney**, NSW: Corner of Oxford and Regent Streets, Riverstone. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G B Macdonald BSc, 60 Hamilton St, Riverstone, NSW 2765. Tel. 02 9627 3408; e-mail: sydneyfpchurch@aapt.net.au.

#### New Zealand

**Auckland**: 45 Church Street, Otahuhu, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J D Smith, 9 Pedlar Place, Conifer Grove, Auckland. Tel: 09 282 4195.

**Gisborne**: 463a Childers Road. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact: Dr G Cramp. Tel: 02 7454 2722.

**Tauranga**: Girl Guide Hall, 17th Avenue, Sabbath 11 am, 7 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Dick Vermeulen. Tel: 075443677.

**Wellington**: 4 Rewa Terrace, Tawa. Sabbath 11 am, 4 pm; 3rd Wednesday of the month (not secondary school holidays) 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Hank Optland, P O Box 150, Carterton, 5743. Tel: 02 7432 5625.

#### Singapore

**Singapore**: Sabbath: 9.30am and 5.30pm; Wednesday: 7.45pm. Room: "Tanglin III" (Level 2), 60 Stevens Road, Singapore 257854. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, 4 Chuan Place, Singapore 554822. Tel: (65) 6383 4466, fax: 6383 4477, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

#### Ukraine

**Odessa**: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua; or Mr D Levytsky; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevytsky@gmail.com.

#### Zimbabwe

**Bulawayo**: Lobengula Township, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo. Rev S Khumalo, F P Manse, Stand No 56004, Mazwi Road, Lobengula, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo. Tel: 00263 9407131.

**Ingwenya**: Church and Secondary School. Rev A B MacLean. Postal Address: Ingwenya Mission, Private Bag T5445, Bulawayo.

**Mbumba**: Church and Hospital: Postal Address: Mbumba Mission Hospital, Private Bag T5406, Bulawayo.

**New Canaan**: Church: Rev Z Mazvabo. Postal Address: Private Bag 615, Zvishavane. Tel 00263 512196.

**Zenka**: Church. Rev M Mloyi. Postal Address: Private Bag T5398, Bulawayo. Cell phone: 0026311 765032.

#### Kenya

**Sengera**: Rev K M Watkins, PO Box 3403, Kisii; e-mail: watkinskenya@gmail.com. Tel: 00254 733 731002.

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